

Guidelines for the Import, Movement and Keeping of Exotic Vertebrates in Australia

**Natural Resource Management Standing
Committee**

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Natural Resource Management Standing Committee

Vertebrate Pests Committee

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1 SUMMARY

These guidelines outline a national approach within the context of Australian Government, State and Territory legislation to minimise the risks posed by the introduction, keeping and movement of exotic vertebrates. They were produced by Vertebrate Pests Committee (VPC) and update previous guidelines which were published in 1991.

The guidelines focus on the development of appropriate strategies to prevent the establishment of new species that pose significant risk to the environment, primary production, or public safety. The adopted approach to managing exotic vertebrates is based on the principles for vertebrate pest management now accepted across Australian jurisdictions.

VPC considered the various scientific approaches that can be used to assess and manage the risks associated with the import and keeping of exotic vertebrates. The most valuable approach was found to come from published scientific knowledge relating to the probability of establishment, the probability of eradication and the potential to inflict damage. This scientific knowledge comes from detailed studies of past introductions of exotic species within Australia and overseas, and the factors that affect establishment success, pest status and the success of eradication programs. Potential for the introduction of diseases that are not known to occur in the natural environment in Australia is an additional factor that has come to prominence in recent years. A significant element of these guidelines will be the Risk Assessment Model developed by the Australian Government Bureau of Rural Sciences (http://www.affa.gov.au/corporate_docs/publications/pdf/rural_science/lms/ferals/risk_assess_book.pdf) and any future updates to it agreed by VPC. This model uses those criteria that have demonstrated significant correlation between a risk factor and the establishment of exotic populations.

The risk assessment model can be used to calculate three risk scores for a particular exotic species: the risk that (1) an escaped or released individual would harm people, (2) escaped or released individuals would establish a wild free-living population (3) the species would be a pest if a wild population did establish. These three risk scores are then used to assign the species to one of four threat categories: extreme, serious, moderate or low.

Guidelines for managing the risk posed by species within each of the four threat categories are detailed in this document. Extreme threat species should not be allowed to enter, nor be kept in any State or Territory. Serious threat species may be introduced and/or should be kept only in collections approved by the relevant State/Territory authority as being primarily kept for public display and education purposes, and/or for genuine scientific research. Moderate threat species should be restricted to collections approved and registered by the relevant State/Territory authority. Low threat species have a low risk of becoming a problem for the environment, primary industry or public safety.

2 DEFINITIONS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACS

Australian Customs Service

Appropriate Jurisdiction (this is slightly unusual to refer to a state agency as a jurisdiction – we do not think this definition is required)

Relevant State, Territory or Australian Government authority, usually a State or Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment, or Agriculture, Australian Government Departments of the Environment, or Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

AQIS

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)

ARAZPA

Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria

BA

Biosecurity Australia

CBD

1992 International Convention on Biological Diversity

CITES

Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

DAFF

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

DEH

The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage

Environment (under the EPBC act) includes:

- (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; and
- (b) natural and physical resources; and
- (c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas;
- (d) heritage values of places; and

(e) the social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

EPBC Act

The (Commonwealth) *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (In fact it has been further amended since then)

Exotic Vertebrate

All mammals (excluding humans), birds, reptiles and amphibians not indigenous to Australia. Fish not indigenous to Australia are the subject of separate guidelines.

Import

Import into Australia or into an external Territory (e.g. Cocos (Keeling) Islands) from another country or by way of introduction from the sea.

Movement

Interstate or intrastate movement of a species within Australia is primarily regulated under State legislation unless there are specific conditions relating to the movement of a specimen under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* or *Quarantine Act 1908*.

NRMSC

Natural Resource Management Standing Committee

Quarantine Act

The Quarantine Act 1908, inclusive of subordinate legislation.

Relevant Authority

In this document the term Relevant Authority shall mean instrumentalities of the Australian Government, State or Territory government with legislative responsibility for the control of exotic vertebrates.

Risk Analysis includes the processes of:

Risk assessment: Process of identifying a hazard (source of potential danger or harm), estimating (in quantitative, semi-quantitative or qualitative terms) the likelihood of conversion of a hazard into actual harm and identifying potential damage and other undesirable outcomes.

Risk management: Process of identifying, documenting and implementing measures that can be applied to reduce the level of risk and its consequence. Where the assessed risk is extreme, management of that risk may be by avoidance i.e., the risk may be negated by taking pre-emptive action such as excluding certain species from Australia.

Risk communication: Process by which information, opinions and processes regarding hazards and risks and their assessment and management are gathered from and communicated to potentially affected and interested parties prior to and during risk assessment and management i.e., open exchange of information between risk assessors, risk managers and those who will be affected by the decisions taken.

Trade

Buying, selling or exchange of commodities (including exotic specimens/vertebrates?) for money or other commodities, or exchange by way of gift.

VPC

The Vertebrate Pests Committee, a technical sub-committee of the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee

WP (REI) Act

Wildlife Protection (Regulations of Exports and Imports) Act 1982. This former Commonwealth statute has now been repealed and replaced by provisions in the EPBC Act.

WTO

World Trade Organisation

3 INTRODUCTION

3.1 General

These guidelines were produced by Vertebrate Pests Committee (VPC), a sub-committee of National Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC). The background and structure of the VPC can be found at Appendix 1.

These guidelines were produced in response to numerous requests from member State, Territory and Australian Government agencies, and other non-government stakeholders to review and update the previous guidelines contained in the Standing Committee on Agriculture Report 37 – *Guidelines for the Control of Exotic Vertebrate Animals (1991)*.

Prevention and early intervention provide the most cost-effective means of dealing with pest problems. A strictly preventative approach would see no further import of species and, in the longer term, a reduction, through natural attrition, in the number of species and individuals held in captivity in Australia. Such an approach was used in Australia for exotic birds for many decades with a complete ban on live imports. This approach was unacceptable to many and may have contributed to incentives for illegal imports, so has been replaced with a risk management approach. This requires scientific and technical analysis of the risks involved, with risk minimisation responses consistent with the significance of the potential risk. Thus decisions are not based on 'zero risk' but rather on an 'acceptable level of risk' that is determined by scientific assessment and maintained at that level by the adoption of risk management strategies.

The adoption of a policy of managed risk for the import and keeping of exotic species has several benefits. It reduces the incentive for illegal import of live animals, with associated exotic disease risks, and it enables legal import and keeping of species that pose low risks of establishing free-living pest populations. However, a likely consequence of the applications of the acceptable risk approach outlined in these guidelines is an increase in the types of exotic species kept in Australia, the number of individual animals kept and the number of collections. This in turn will increase the risk that some species will establish in the wild and damage primary production, the environment or public safety.

These guidelines are based on the legislation and policy in place at the date of publication. There is ongoing work on development of policy on some aspects of vertebrate pest management. As a consequence they may be amended as considered appropriate by the VPC.

Members of the public can obtain further information about the import of exotic vertebrates into Australia from the relevant Australian Government agencies. Information about the movement and keeping of exotic vertebrates is available from the relevant State and Territory or Australian Government agencies. Contact details for these organizations are listed in Appendix 2.

3.2 Assessing the risk

These guidelines provide a nationally consistent framework for assessing the risk posed to the environment, agriculture and public safety by species of exotic vertebrates. The assessment is based on:

- the danger posed by an individual animal,
- the likelihood of establishment,

- the consequences of establishment.

The assessment results in the placement of species into one of the four threat categories, extreme, serious, moderate or low.

These guidelines recommend a nationally consistent approach to the import, keeping and movement of exotic vertebrates, as determined by the threat category into which they are placed.

3.3 Who will use these guidelines?

These guidelines will be used primarily by Australian Government, State and Territory agencies, which have a direct responsibility for legislative control over the import, movement or keeping of exotic vertebrates in Australia. To be as effective as possible in addressing these risks, control of potential pests requires a uniformly applied system for the import, movement and keeping of exotic vertebrates to be adopted by the Australian Government and all States and Territories. These guidelines may be used by any relevant authorities to develop uniform policies and legislative controls for the management of vertebrate species.

They will also be available to the public.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with Bomford, M. (2003). *Risk Assessment for the Import and Keeping of Exotic Vertebrates in Australia*. Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra

3.4 Species

These guidelines apply to vertebrates not indigenous to Australia but exclude exotic fish

Some species are established pests and/or livestock widely kept in Australia, e.g. Individual jurisdictions may decide not to apply these guidelines to such species.

3.5 The need

Australia is particularly susceptible to the establishment of exotic vertebrate populations and diseases because of its evolutionary isolation from other major land masses. Since European settlement, many species of exotic vertebrates have become established as a result of deliberate or accidental releases. The harmful effects of introduced exotic vertebrates such as rabbits, foxes, feral goats, cane toads, starlings, mynahs and sparrows cost many millions of dollars each year, and further millions are spent by landholders and government authorities in attempts to control these pests. These species cause immeasurable harm to the natural environment as well as to primary industry. Internationally, invasive exotic species are now recognised as one of the most significant threats to biodiversity (SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group, 2000). The Prime Minister's Science and Engineering Innovation Council, at its May 2002 meeting, identified investment to limit the spread of pests, weeds and imported diseases as one of four key areas likely to return greatest impact in heading off the diminishing value of Australia's natural systems and biodiversity.

These costs could have been avoided if the species had not been introduced and established in the first place. While efforts to control established pests continue, it is vital that the chances of new species becoming established are minimised. Although many species may be kept with little risk of adding to Australia's pest problems, it is recognised that the

widespread keeping and movement of some species would pose an unacceptable level of risk of them being released, either accidentally or deliberately. They could then become established and cause damage to primary production or the environment or pose an unacceptable risk to public safety. Australia currently has nearly 60 exotic vertebrates (more if fish are considered) and these species cost hundreds of millions annually in losses to agricultural production, as well as contributing to environmental degradation and threatening the survival of many native species (Bomford and Hart 2002).

These guidelines outline a national approach within the context of Commonwealth Government, State and Territory legislation to minimise the risks posed by exotic vertebrates.

3.6 Immediate outcomes

- Import, movement and keeping is informed by application of the 'Bomford' risk assessment process and other processes as considered appropriate;
- The administering authorities for import are DAFF (AQIS - quarantine) and DEH (import approval);
- Minimum keeping standards are implemented as per Section 6 of these guidelines;
- Jurisdictions agree to manage risk in accordance with the principles and processes outlined in this document;

3.7 On-going expected outcomes

- Future import assessments by DEH and DAFF will be informed by this model, in a manner consistent with international trade and environmental obligations;
- That applications to assess or review the threat of exotic vertebrates are handled through a timely, scientific and open process.
- That appeals against decisions on the level of threat from specific exotic vertebrates are handled in a formal process, according to the legislative requirements of the relevant jurisdiction.

3.8 Where do these guidelines fit with the regulation of live vertebrate imports under Commonwealth legislation?

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) and the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) regulate the importation of exotic vertebrates. All imported animals must be accompanied by an AQIS permit. This permit sets out conditions under which the quarantine risk posed by the species can be managed. Animals not listed on Part 1 of DEH's live import list also require a permit to import from DEH that sets out conditions under which risks to the environment can be managed. The legislative backing of AQIS and DEH is described in Section 4 of this document. The Australian Customs Service (ACS) is involved when the importation of animals may pose a risk to public safety; legislation bans the import of dangerous dog breeds.

For species already kept in Australia, the entry of new genotypes may pose additional risks. Individual jurisdictions may decide to conduct a risk assessment of such new genotypes.

3.8.1 Regulation of imports – The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage

The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) administers the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the *EPBC Act*).

The *EPBC Act* establishes a list of specimens suitable for live import. The live import list comprises two parts:

Part 1 comprises unregulated specimens that do not require a live import permit under the *EPBC Act*. The largely unrestricted list includes exotic vertebrates from animal groups such as live domesticated animals, bony fishes (Osteichthyes), cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyes), and birds (Aves). Some freshwater fish may be subject to certain listed conditions.

Part 2 comprises allowable regulated specimens that require a live import permit under the *EPBC Act*. The list includes species from those groups listed for Part 1, in addition to approved amphibians and reptiles and non-domesticated mammals. Imports of specimens from Part 2 of the list may also be subject to certain conditions.

The live import list is available in the internet at www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/import/index.html

Amendment of the live import list can be made either at the request of the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage, or by application. In both cases, new species may be added to the list only after their potential impacts on the environment have been fully assessed to the satisfaction of the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

A decision to amend the list resides with the Minister. The Minister must consult with other Federal, State and Territory Ministers as appropriate, and may consult other persons, prior to making a final decision. If approved, the amendment will be made public by instrument published in the Australian Government Gazette. The amendment must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament and may be disallowed. If a disallowance motion were successful, then the species would remain a prohibited import.

The assessment to amend the live import list relates to a review of the potential environmental impact of the species. The permitting system which approves the import of a specimen considers the likely impacts on biodiversity, including the conservation status of species and communities, the CITES status of a species, animal welfare issues etc.

3.8.2 Possession of unlawfully imported animals – The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage

The *EPBC Act* contains provisions that make it an offence for a person to be in possession of a live non-native wildlife specimen that was not lawfully imported or is progeny of specimens that were not lawfully imported (section 303GN). Accordingly, where an authorised officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person is in possession of a specimen, or progeny of a specimen, imported into Australia illegally, the authorised officer may seize that specimen. Generally a specimen will be considered to have been imported lawfully if:

- it is a specimen of a species listed on Part 1 of the “List of Specimens Suitable for Live Import” (EPBC Act). Part 1 - identifies specimens that do not require an import permit from the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage; or
- the specimen is, or is progeny of, an animal imported under a permit issued under the EPBC Act or the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982* (the Wildlife Protection Act relates to imports between 1 May 1984 and 11 July 2001); or
- the specimen is, or is the progeny of, an animal that was imported prior to 1 May 1984 (ie. prior to the Wildlife Protection Act) and was imported in accordance with Customs and Quarantine Regulations.

In accordance with the *Criminal Code*, where there is a prosecution for an offence against s303GN the defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to certain matters. People needing information on the possession offence should contact the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and if concerned about their legal situation should seek legal advice.

3.8.2.1 Legally held birds

Individual bird specimens and their progeny that can be shown to have been previously registered under the National Exotic Bird Registration Scheme (NEBRS) will be considered lawfully held.

Individual bird specimens of species that were exempt from registration under NEBRS will be considered lawfully held except in cases where the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage has reasonable grounds to suspect that the individual bird was illegally imported. DEH advises State and Territory agencies they should not register or license the keeping of any exotic specimens that can not be shown to have been imported legally.

Individual bird specimens and their progeny that were not previously registered under NEBRS will in the first instance be considered unlawfully held. This includes:

- birds where the species was registered under NEBRS but where the individual bird specimen or its parent birds were not registered under NEBRS; and
- birds of a species where there were no registrations of that species type under NEBRS.

3.8.3 Regulation of imports – Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The *Quarantine Act 1908* (the Quarantine Act) is administered¹ by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The Quarantine Act outlines measures to prevent or control of the introduction, establishment or spread of diseases or pests that will or could cause significant damage to human beings, animals, plants, other aspects of the environment or economic activities. Like the EPBC Act, the

¹ Human quarantine, is administered by the Director of Human Quarantine within the Australian Department of Health and Ageing.

Quarantine Act also refers to a permitted list. In cases where a specimen proposed for import is not currently permitted (listed), specific applications are required under Australian Government legislation to assess the risk of importation to the environment and quarantine.

For the purposes of the Quarantine Act the term *environment* includes all aspects of the surroundings of human beings, whether natural surroundings or those created by human beings themselves, and whether affecting them as individuals or in social groupings.

3.8.4 Regulation within Australia – State and Territory authorities

The subsequent trade and movement within Australia of any exotic vertebrate that has been imported into Australia in compliance with the *EPBC Act* and the *Quarantine Act* may require the importer/applicant to obtain written approval from DEH, AQIS and the relevant State or Territory authority. (The *Quarantine Act 1908* only applies to directly imported animals and is limited to the extent it can manage movement and keeping post importation. In addition to regulating imports, DEH has the capacity to set some conditions on keeping and movement.)

After importation, the keeping, trade and movement of exotic vertebrates and their subsequent generations will be a matter for the relevant State or Territory Authorities. The authorities take into consideration any conditions placed on the species by the Australian Government at the time of listing.

A list of species known to be legally held under State or Territory legislation is maintained by the VPC – see Section 5.4.

4 PRINCIPLES

4.1 Serving the national interest

The desired outcome from managing the import, movement and keeping of exotic vertebrates is to minimise potential damage to primary production, the environment and public safety resulting from the release or escape and establishment of wild populations of exotic vertebrates in Australia.

These guidelines focus on managing the risks posed by vertebrate pests, by development of appropriate strategies to prevent the establishment of new species that pose significant risk to the environment, primary production or public safety. The adopted approach to managing exotic vertebrates needs to be based on the principles for vertebrate pest management now accepted across Australian jurisdictions (eg Braysher 1993).

These principles are described in the following sections.

4.1.1 Decisions are taken in the public interest

Decisions on the import, keeping and movement of exotic species are made in the public interest. The private benefit to be gained from exotic vertebrates being in Australia should not be promoted over the public benefit of the species not being in Australia, due to their potential impacts on the environment, primary production and human safety.

4.2 Consistency with international obligations

4.2.1 Maintenance of biological diversity

Australia is a signatory to the 1992 International Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which under Article 8 (h) states that:

"Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate:

(h) Prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species."

In response to this article The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has developed guidelines ('IUCN Guidelines for The Prevention of Biodiversity Loss Caused by Alien Invasive Species') to prevent further losses of biological diversity due to the deleterious effects of alien invasive species. The intention is to assist governments and management agencies to meet their obligations under the 1992 CBD. These guidelines were approved by the 51st Meeting of the IUCN Council, Gland Switzerland, February 2000 and have been used as a guide in the development of this report.

Strategies being developed by IUCN for implementation of these guidelines call for alien species that may become invasive to be prohibited entry under national legislation.

4.2.2 Precautionary principle

The 1992 International Convention on Biological Diversity, to which Australia is a signatory, also offers decision-makers guidance based on the application of the precautionary principle to the protection of biodiversity. The convention recommends that where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimise such a threat.

4.2.3 WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION – prevention of restrictions on trade

Australia is a signatory to international agreements on trade and quarantine under the World Trade Organization (WTO), which was established, among other things, to "...seek to protect and preserve the environment ..." in the "field of trade and economic endeavour". The agreement on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) allows countries to apply measures to "limit other damage...from the entry [introduction], establishment or spread of pests". The SPS Agreement also requires that, in its assessment of risks, Members take into account "relevant ecological and environmental conditions". In addition, the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (the TBT Agreement) ensures that "no country shall be prevented from taking measures necessary for the protection of...the environment..." The WTO supports international trade that does not involve unjustified or disguised trade barriers.

4.2.4 Transparent and Equitable Processes

In the public interest, decisions need to be transparent and equitable. Decisions also need to comply with quarantine legislation and be consistent with international agreements and conventions to which Australia is a signatory.

These guidelines clearly articulate the processes involved with assessing the risks associated with importing and keeping exotic vertebrate species. The assessment process is based on publicly available information including the documented risk assessment model.

Australian Government assessment processes for new live imports provide for public and stakeholder consultation during the process to determine if a species is suitable for live import, and if so, the conditions under which the import can occur.

State and Territory assessment processes also allow for consultation with relevant stakeholder groups.

The results of the risk assessment are open to appeal by stakeholders.

4.3 Risk analysis approach

The probable costs and benefits of importing and keeping exotic species in Australia are difficult to assess and quantify. First, there is seldom a complete body of biological information on a species. Second, scientific predictions are imprecise about the ecology and behaviour of a species in a new environment, in relation to the probability of establishment, management, eradication and the extent of damage caused.

Given these limitations, VPC has considered the range of scientific approaches that can be taken to assess and manage the risks associated with the import and keeping of exotic

vertebrates. The most valuable approach is to use published scientific information relating to the probability of establishment, the probability of eradication (although not used in final assessment model) and the potential to inflict damage. This information comes from detailed studies of past introductions of exotic species and the factors that affect establishment success, pest status and the success of eradication programs. Risk analysis is the process used to assess, manage and communicate the threat from exotic vertebrates and has three processes:

- *Assessment*: Identifying a hazard (source of potential danger or harm) estimating (in quantitative, semi-quantitative or qualitative terms) the likelihood of conversion of a hazard into actual harm and identifying potential damage and other undesirable outcomes.
- *Management*: Identifying, documenting and implementing measures that can be applied to reduce the level of risk and its consequence. Where the assessed risk is extreme, management of that risk may be by avoidance ie, the risk may be negated by taking preemptive action such as excluding certain species from Australia.
- *Communication*: Information, opinions and processes regarding hazards and risks and their assessment and management are gathered from and communicated to potentially affected and interested parties prior to and during risk assessment and management i.e., open exchange of information between risk assessors, risk managers and those who will be affected by the decisions taken.

This document concentrates on risk assessment and risk management. A Risk Assessment Model has been developed by the Australian Government Bureau of Rural Sciences, within DAFF, using criteria with a demonstrated significant correlation between a risk factor and the establishment of exotic populations (see Section 5 on Risk Assessment for further detail) whereby risk assessment is to be scientifically sound, rigorous and independent of the proponent.

Because of the extreme or serious threat posed by some species, the benefit derived from their keeping is clearly outweighed by the potential harm they would cause.

4.4 Beneficiary pays

All stakeholders have a duty of care to manage the risks posed by vertebrate pests: risk management is not the singular responsibility of government agencies.

Where risks cannot be avoided, the costs of managing those risks should be borne by those benefiting i.e., the beneficiaries of exotic vertebrates being in Australia should pay for the costs of managing those risks along with those benefiting from the risks being minimised.

In addition to legislative controls, effective management of the risks will typically require exotic vertebrates requires an education and coordination framework which encourages stakeholder participation.

4.5 Risk analysis of exotic vertebrates proposed for import

The requirements of both the EPBC Act and the Quarantine Act must be met before the importation of a new exotic vertebrate is approved. DAFF and DEH have complementary

processes that meet the requirements of the EPBC Act and the Quarantine Act and take into account these Guidelines [and the document of Bomford, M. (2003). (Risk Assessment for the Import and Keeping of Exotic Vertebrates in Australia. Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra)].

4.6 Risk analysis of exotic vertebrates already held in Australia

These guidelines represent a national approach to minimising risk posed by all exotic vertebrates, including those species already in Australia, those in captivity and those that have established wild populations. The process of risk assessment for species already in Australia should therefore be the same as for those species for which import permission is sought. Risk assessment of exotic vertebrates already known to be in Australia, that are not on the approved import list would enable them to be placed in appropriate threat categories so that:

- DEH and DAFF can make decisions on whether to approve future importation of these species with knowledge of the threat potential posed by the species.
- State and Territory instrumentalities with responsibility for vertebrate pest management can develop appropriate uniform policies and legislative controls based on the agreed level of threat to primary production, the environment and public safety.
- State and Territory instrumentalities, using these guidelines, can implement uniform minimum control standards to manage the risk of keeping exotic vertebrates based on their potential threat.

Approval to keep species that have been assigned to a threat category in accordance with these guidelines will be decided by the relevant authority in the State or Territory in which the species will be kept. State and Territory authorities agree to use these guidelines in managing the risks posed by exotic vertebrates already in Australia.

4.7 Risk assessment appeal process

Various formal appeals processes are available according to the authority whose decision is being appealed.

4.8 Animal welfare

These guidelines do not make specific recommendations in relation to animal welfare issues associated with the import, movement and keeping of exotic vertebrates. Animal welfare is addressed under separate Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation. However, in setting down minimum conditions for the keeping of exotic vertebrates it is recommended that all agencies show a duty of care by directing keepers to appropriate controls, guidelines and/or codes of practice which relate to animal welfare issues.

4.9 Future changes to these guidelines

There is a continuing need for ongoing discussion and monitoring of these guidelines by Australian Government and State or Territory agencies. In accordance with the VPC terms of reference, the VPC provides the appropriate forum for this process.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment processes for importing and keeping exotic vertebrates are important in reducing the likelihood of new species establishing wild populations in Australia and becoming pests.

5.1 Process

Risk assessment involves:

- identifying hazardous events (in this case the establishment of new exotic vertebrate pest species in Australia);
- estimating the likelihood that such an event will occur; and
- assessing the probable consequences if it does (Beer and Ziolkowski 1995).

5.2 Assessment factors

A risk assessment for exotic vertebrates needs to assess the probability that:

- an escape or release will occur
- escaped or released individuals would cause harm
- escaped or released individuals would establish a free living population ; and
- exotic populations of the species would cause economic, social or environmental harm, and the degree and types of such harm.

The first of these factors will be partially determined by the conditions under which the species can be kept as well as intrinsic characteristics of the species concerned and the biotic and abiotic components of the environment where the release occurs. Conditions for keeping are dealt with by risk management (see Section 6). The second and third factors will be partially determined by the management response following an escape or release as well as intrinsic characteristics of the species concerned. The fourth factor will be determined by intrinsic characteristics of the species and by the attitudes and values of Australian society to a new invasive exotic species. It is the intrinsic characteristics of particular species that are dealt with by this risk assessment. Risk assessment could include an evaluation of the feasibility that a newly established population could be detected and eradicated. However, eradication feasibility is not included in this risk assessment model because it would be unlikely to be achieved under most Australian conditions and because the probability of eradication being achievable is extremely difficult to predict (Bomford 2003).

The risks involved with the introduction of vertebrate species to Australia have been assessed by analysing past successful and unsuccessful introductions of vertebrate species into Australia, and by reviewing published studies of establishment success and the

consequences of establishment both in Australia and overseas. These risk factors have been used to develop a risk assessment model that is described fully in Bomford (2003).

A species' Threat Category is determined from three component Risk Scores:

- **Danger posed by individual animals** — risk individual animals will harm people
- **Establishment likelihood** — risk that a particular species will establish a wild population in Australia
- **Establishment consequence** — risk an established population of the species will cause harm (become a pest).

5.2.1 Danger posed by individual animals

Individual escaped or released animals may be able to inflict significant damage or directly harm people if they are aggressive, large, or if they have organs capable of inflicting harm, such as teeth, claws, spines, a sharp bill, or toxin-delivering apparatus and have a known history of attacking, injuring or killing people, or may carry disease or pathogens.

5.2.2 Establishment success

For birds and mammals introduced to Australia, the most significant species' attributes associated with establishment success are (approximately in descending order of importance):

- a high correlation between the climatic conditions in the species' overseas range and those in Australia
- a history of establishing exotic populations outside Australia
- having a widespread geographic range outside Australia
- being a mammal (rather than a bird, reptile or amphibian).
- being non-migratory in native range
- having a generalist diet
- being able to live in human disturbed habitats (human commensalism)

In addition to the species attributes listed above, the other factor that is strongly correlated with establishment success is the release effort, particularly the number of sites at which a species is released, and also the number of individuals released and the number of times releases occur. Release effort can be interpreted as the number of times accidental or deliberate releases are likely to occur. The likelihood of accidental or deliberate release can be expected to increase with the number of collections of a particular species in Australia,

the number of individuals within those collections and the lack of adequately maintained security within those collections. The value of such collections to their owners and to others is also likely to be inversely related to their accidental or deliberate release. Except for specialist species, which can only live in habitats that have no climatic match in Australia, many species probably have the potential to establish exotic populations here, given sufficient releases and favourable circumstances.

Based on current levels of knowledge and ecological theory, no risk assessment system, quantitative, semi-quantitative or qualitative, will guarantee whether or not a particular exotic vertebrate species would establish in Australia if released. The process outlined by these guidelines sets out the procedures to minimise the risks given judicious use of the available information and given appropriate application of the precautionary principle.

5.2.3 Becoming a pest following establishment

For birds and mammals, the most significant species' attributes associated with becoming a pest following establishment are (approximately in descending order of importance):

- a climate match between the species' overseas range and any areas in Australia where susceptible primary production industries are located
- a climate match between the species' overseas range and any areas in Australia where susceptible native species or communities occur that could be harmed if the species established
- being an agricultural, forestry or environmental pest anywhere overseas
- being in a taxonomic group that has demonstrated detrimental effects on primary production or on prey abundance or that has caused habitat degradation
- being a predatory mammal (particularly if arboreal) or a mammal that is primarily a grazer or a browser
- having attributes (for example toxin-delivering organs) or behaviour that could harm people
- being a potential vector or reservoir for diseases that could affect people, livestock, other domestic animals or native wildlife.
- having attributes that could cause damage to structures or equipment
- using tree hollows for nests or shelter
- having a wide geographic range outside Australia.

5.3 Assignment to threat categories

These three risk scores are then used to assign the exotic species to one of four threat categories: extreme, serious, moderate or low (Table 2).

Table 2. Assigning species to threat categories

Danger posed by individual animals (risk a captive or escaped individual animal would harm people)	Establishment likelihood (risk that a particular species will establish a wild population in Australia)	Establishment consequence (Risk an established population would cause harm)	VPC Threat category	Implication for any proposed import into Australia	Implication for keeping and movement in Australia
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	Prohibited	Limited to those collections approved for keeping particular Extreme Threat species
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Extreme	High	Extreme		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Extreme	Moderate	Extreme		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Extreme	Low	Extreme		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	High	Extreme	Extreme		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	High	High	Extreme		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Moderate	Extreme	Extreme		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	High	Moderate	Serious		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	High	Low	Serious		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Moderate	High	Serious		
Highly Dangerous	Moderate	Moderate	Serious		
Highly Dangerous	Moderate	Low	Serious		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Low	Extreme	Serious		
Highly, Moderately or Not Dangerous	Low	High	Serious		
Highly Dangerous	Low	Moderate	Serious		
Highly Dangerous	Low	Low	Serious		
Moderately or Not Dangerous	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Import restricted to those collections approved for keeping Moderate Threat species	Limited to those collections approved for keeping Moderate Threat species
Moderately or Not Dangerous	Moderate	Low	Moderate		
Moderately or Not Dangerous	Low	Moderate	Moderate		
Moderately Dangerous	Low	Low	Moderate		
				Import permitted	Keeping permitted
Not Dangerous	Low	Low	Low		

Unknown	Any value	Any value	Extreme until proven otherwise	Prohibited	Limited to those collections approved for keeping particular Extreme Threat Species
Any value	Unknown	Any value	Extreme until proven otherwise	Prohibited	Limited to those collections approved for keeping particular Extreme Threat Species
Any value	Any value	Unknown	Extreme until proven otherwise	Prohibited	Limited to those collections approved for keeping particular Extreme Threat Species
Unassessed	Unassessed	Unassessed	Extreme until proven otherwise	Prohibited	Limited to those collections approved for keeping particular Extreme Threat Species

5.4 List of exotic vertebrates in Australia

Through the VPC, the Australian Government, States and Territories will continue to maintain a definitive list of the exotic vertebrates that have been assigned to threat categories and can be legally held under State and Territory legislation. The exotic species list will be the main reference source for Australian Government, State and Territory authorities on the movement and keeping of exotic vertebrate animals in Australia.

All States and Territories should take account of the resulting list of species in their respective legislation. Acceptance of the list of exotic vertebrates by all States and Territories will imply that any exotic vertebrate not listed in the Serious, Moderate or Low Threat categories is automatically in the Extreme category and must not be brought into Australia or held within the States and Territories without the species being categorised and without full compliance with the *Quarantine Act 1908* and the *EPBC Act 1999*. Acceptance of the list will also imply that States, Territories and the Australian Government will use it as a reference in controlling the movement and keeping of exotic vertebrate animals.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

The risks posed by exotic vertebrates in Australia are best handled by integrated risk assessment, risk management and communication of both the risks and the ways of addressing them.

While the consequences of the escape and establishment of a species listed as of extreme or serious threat will be more harmful than for other species, the likelihood of escape and establishment may be much greater for species with a lower risk but which are kept much more widely under less stringent security. This is because most vertebrate species introduced into Australia will be under some form of management (for example, into zoos, or as agricultural livestock). Given enough time, escape is almost inevitable from most managed populations. The risk of escape will increase with the number of managed populations and with the lack of adequate security. Thus all collections of exotic vertebrates should be managed to minimise the risk of accidental or deliberate release. Release of all exotic species from effective human control should continue to be prohibited.

The established pests and livestock traditionally kept in Australia may be managed according to the threat categories determined by these national guidelines if further establishment or escapes from captivity would compromise control measures. For example, if new genetic material was introduced that enabled the species to survive and thrive in environments where it was not currently a problem then these guidelines may be applied.

Table 3 is a guide for State and Territory authorities on the minimum level of security measures appropriate to each risk category. The options for restricting breeding need to be relevant to particular species and the circumstances of the collection.

Table 3. Examples of the minimum level of security measures appropriate for risk management for the import and keeping of exotic vertebrates.

Risk Management Option	Extreme	Serious	Moderate	Low
High security facility approved by the relevant State or Territory authority for keeping a particular extreme threat species.	✓			
Serious threat species kept for:		✓		
i. public display and education purposes approved by the relevant State or Territory authority, and/or				
ii. genuine scientific research approved by the relevant State or Territory authority.				
Species will be restricted to collections registered by the relevant State or Territory authority for keeping serious or moderate threat species.		✓	✓	
Nil Import	✓			
Single sex (including non-pregnant females) or sterilised animals	✓			
Limit No < 20 (population management plan)	✓	✓		
Population management plan with max no.	✓	✓	✓	
High Security Facility	✓	✓	✓	
Authorised handling restrictions / Appropriate expertise	✓	✓	✓	
Bio-climatic site restrictions	✓	✓		
Contingency Plans for Escapes	✓	✓	✓	
Restriction on proximity to suitable habitat	✓	✓	✓	
Notification of trade under permit between States	✓	✓	✓	
Individuals micro-chipped	✓	✓		
Demonstrate Long term viability – Contingency Plan for trade of animals	✓	✓		
Proprietors and key personnel to have no relevant criminal convictions	✓	✓	✓	
Bonds	✓	✓		
Record Keeping	✓	✓	✓	
Meet Animal Welfare Requirements (NB This is not a VPC restriction but would be required by other legislation)	✓	✓	✓	
Notification of movement of animals between facilities	✓	✓	✓	

6.1 Extreme threat species

Such species should not be allowed to enter, nor be kept in any State or Territory. However, any collection containing Extreme Threat Species should be subject to approval by the relevant State or Territory authority on a case-by-case basis as meeting best practice

standards for keeping of the species concerned and to standards acceptable to the appropriate jurisdictions. The keeping and movement of specimens in this category will also have to be conducted in compliance with any conditions placed on the species by DEH and AQIS at the time of import. This will include the following standards:

- Such species should only be kept in facilities approved for a particular extreme threat species. eg. a facility approved by the State or Territory authorities for keeping the species.
- A Risk Management Policy must be in place that manages all internal threats to the continued confinement of captive exotic vertebrates. These threats would include maintenance of the physical security of the premises and animals and conditions for the handling and movement of animals.
- The overall standard of management of the collection must be of a high level and acceptable to the appropriate jurisdictions.
- Evaluation of environmental aspects/impacts of the facility so that external threats are minimised. These would include natural threats (eg storm, flood and fire) and human threats (eg deliberate release or theft).
- Auditing and reviewing of the risk management processes.
- Premises:
 - Security relevant to the species currently being housed. This must be adequate to prevent escape due to damage caused by a natural disaster.
 - The overall standard of management of the collection must be of a high level and acceptable to the appropriate jurisdictions.
 - Location of the premises must be suitable for security relevant to the species, that is wherever possible, the surrounding area should be a hostile environment for the welfare of the species
 - The premises must be available for inspection by authorities at any reasonable time
- Keepers should have:
 - Demonstrated expertise with the species in question or similar species. Evidence of expertise in the form of written references from recognised reputable referees may be required. A program for maintaining the skill level of staff through training or other measures must be demonstrated to the appropriate jurisdiction.
 - No prior conviction under Australian Government, State or Territory legislation relating to the import and keeping of animals.

- Other conditions
 - Records of all introductions, births, deaths and transfers, are to be kept, with stock returns being provided on a regular basis to the relevant authority as required.
 - The relevant authority must approve the system of carcass/egg disposal.
 - The maximum number of specimens and the sex may be listed on the licence, taking into account security factors, fecundity, whether the species is endangered or rare, etc.
 - The facility should be able to demonstrate long term financial viability through a business plan or other forms of financial support, underwriting or guarantees.
 - There must be a general contingency plan for the relocation of animals should the decision be made to no longer maintain the collection.
 - A generic contingency plan must be written and in place, to handle the deliberate or accidental release of animals from the facility.
 - The facility should be a member of the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA) or equivalent professional bodies and abide by the body's "Code of Ethics".
 - Release of all exotic vertebrates from effective human control is prohibited under State and Territory laws. For example, in NSW under s13 of the *Non-indigenous Animals Act 1987* and s109 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*.

- Breeding
 - Because of the extreme risk posed by these species, their breeding will be controlled and limited to those species that are CITES listed and subject to an appropriate management plan to ensure breeding meets conservation objectives, such as an ARAZPA Species Management Program. The preferred position should be to manage numbers of such species on a non-replacement basis.
 - Other extreme risk species should be held in single sex colonies, with an appropriate distance maintained between such colonies. Numbers of animals held in each collection should be limited. Where animal welfare considerations prevent these restrictions being applied, the species should not be held in Australia.

- Specimens seized at or beyond border restrictions, as a result of illegal or accidental introduction will be appropriately disposed of under the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Quarantine Act, 1908*. This may include immediate re-export, humane destruction or, in exceptional circumstances, transfer to an established and approved Australian collection of this species, subject to quarantine and customs requirements.

- Trade between states – if an animal requiring a permit is to be moved interstate, it will be necessary for the authority in the State or Territory of origin to ensure that the intended recipient has an appropriate State or Territory permit prior to taking possession. It is the responsibility of the holder of an animal to ensure that they are compliant with the Australian Government legislation relating to the possession of exotic animals. (A special procedure applies to travelling animal collections including circuses – see section below.) A contact officer should be nominated in each State and Territory to supply this information on permit holders and to provide ongoing liaison on other matters as required. A list of contact officers and quarantine officers will be maintained by the VPC.

6.2 Serious threat species

Any collection containing Serious Threat Species will be subject to approval by the relevant State or Territory authority as meeting best practice for keeping of the species concerned and as being primarily kept for:

- public display and education purposes, and/or
- genuine scientific research approved by the relevant State or Territory authority.

The import, keeping and movement of specimens in this category will also have to be done in compliance with any conditions placed on the species by DEH and AQIS at the time of import. This will include the following standards:

- A Risk Management Policy that manages all internal threats to continued confinement of captive exotic vertebrates must be in place. These threats would include maintenance of the physical security of premises and animals and conditions for the handling and movement of animals.
- The overall standard of management of the collection must be of a high level and acceptable to the appropriate jurisdictions.
- Evaluation of environmental aspects/impacts of the facility so that external threats are minimised. These would include natural threats (eg storm, flood and fire) and human threats (eg deliberate release or theft).
- Auditing and reviewing of the risk management processes.
- Premises
 - Security relevant to the species currently being housed. This must be adequate to withstand damage caused by a natural disaster.
 - The overall standard of management of the collection must be of a high level and acceptable to the appropriate jurisdictions.

- Location of the premises must be suitable for security relevant to the species, that is wherever possible, the surrounding area should be a hostile environment for the welfare of the species
- The premises must be available for inspection by authorities at any reasonable time.
- Keepers should have:
 - Demonstrated expertise with the species in question or similar species. Evidence of expertise in the form of written references from recognised reputable referees may be required. A program for maintaining the skill level of staff through training or other measures must be demonstrated to the appropriate jurisdiction.
 - No prior conviction under Australian Government, State or Territory legislation relating to the import, keeping or trade of animals.
- Other conditions
 - Records of all introductions, births, deaths and transfers, are to be kept, with stock returns being provided to the controlling authority on a regular basis to the relevant authority as required.
 - The relevant authority must approve the system of carcass/egg disposal.
 - The maximum number of specimens and the sex may be listed on the licence, taking into account security factors, fecundity, whether the species is endangered or rare, etc.
 - The facility should be able to demonstrate long term financial viability through a business plan or other forms of financial support, underwriting or guarantees.
 - There must be a general contingency plan for the relocation of animals should the decision be made to no longer maintain the collection.
 - A generic contingency plan must be written to handle the deliberate or accidental release of animals from the facility.
 - The facility should be a member of ARAZPA or equivalent professional bodies and abide by the body's "Code of Ethics".
 - Release of all exotic vertebrates from effective human control is prohibited.
- Species not currently held in Australia may be granted import approval through AQIS and DEH importation controls for import into those collections meeting these criteria and the restrictions of any relevant State or Territory authorities.
- Breeding

- Breeding will be limited to those species subject to an ARAZPA Species Management Program. Numbers of animals held in each collection should be limited to reasonable numbers for that species, including consideration of the number required to maintain national viability of the species and to meet animal welfare requirements.
- States/Territories will remain responsible for imposing any additional restrictions on acquisition and keeping of Serious Threat Species.
- Specimens seized at or beyond border restrictions, as a result of illegal or accidental introduction, may be disposed of by immediate re-export, humane destruction or transfer to an established and approved Australian collection of this species, subject to quarantine and customs requirements and other relevant Australian Government legislative controls (eg. must appear on the Australian Government list of specimens suitable for live import).
- Trade between states – if an animal requiring a permit is to be moved interstate, it will be necessary for the authority in the State or Territory of origin to ensure that the intended recipient has an appropriate State or Territory permit prior to taking possession. It is the responsibility of the holder of an animal to ensure that they are compliant with the Australian Government legislation relating to the possession of exotic animals. (A special procedure applies to travelling animal collections including circuses – see section below). A contact officer should be nominated in each State and Territory to supply this information on permit holders and to provide ongoing liaison on other matters as required. A list of contact officers and quarantine officers will be maintained by the VPC.

6.3 Moderate threat species

Moderate Threat Species will be restricted to collections registered by the relevant State or Territory authority for the keeping of Moderate Threat Species. States/Territories may continue to impose any additional restrictions on acquisition and keeping of Moderate Threat Species. The import, keeping and movement of specimens in this category will also have to be done in compliance with any conditions placed on the species by DEH and AQIS at the time of import.

- Guidelines will be developed to assist all relevant States/Territory authorities to set appropriate physical security, competency and propriety standards for the keeping of Moderate Threat Species.
- Release of all exotic vertebrates from effective human control is prohibited.
- Auditing of collections containing Moderate Threat Species will be sufficient to minimise the risk of such species being accidentally or deliberately released.
- Species not currently held in Australia may be granted import approval through AQIS and DEH importation controls for import into those collections meeting these criteria and the restrictions of any relevant State or Territory authorities.
- Specimens seized at or beyond border restrictions, as a result of illegal or accidental introduction, may be transferred to an established and approved Australian collection

of this species, subject to quarantine and customs requirements and other relevant Australian Government legislative controls (eg must appear on the Australian Government list of specimens suitable for live import).

- Trade between states – if an animal requiring a permit is to be moved interstate, it will be necessary for the authority in the State or Territory of origin to ensure that the intended recipient has an appropriate State or Territory permit prior to taking possession. It is the responsibility of the holder of an animal to ensure that they are compliant with the Australian Government legislation relating to the possession of exotic animals. (A special procedure applies to travelling animal collections including circuses – see section below). A contact officer should be nominated in each State and Territory to supply this information on permit holders and to provide ongoing liaison on other matters as required. A list of contact officers and quarantine officers will be maintained by the VPC.

6.4 Low threat species

The keeping of Low Threat Species will not be restricted by these guidelines (although individual States/Territories may impose restrictions necessary for protection within their jurisdictions).

- Species not currently held in Australia may be granted import approval through AQIS and DEH importation controls for import, subject to any relevant State or Territory restrictions.
- Specimens seized at or beyond border restrictions, as a result of illegal or accidental introduction, may be transferred to Australian collections of this species, subject to quarantine and customs requirements and other relevant Australian Government legislative controls (eg. must appear on the Australian Government list of specimens suitable for live import).
- Release of all exotic vertebrates from effective human control is prohibited.

6.5 Unassessed species

Any exotic vertebrate species either proposed for import or detected in the country, that has not been assessed previously will be considered to be in the Extreme Threat Category and will be treated accordingly, until a risk assessment is conducted. However, species listed on the live import list (established under the *EPBC Act*) have been previously considered to be suitable for import. A permit to import a regulated live specimen under the *EPBC Act* cannot be granted unless the Minister or his delegate is satisfied that "the proposed import would not be likely to threaten the conservation status of a species or ecological community; or likely to threaten biodiversity". Satisfaction of these criteria would require consideration of pest potential.

6.6 Special procedures for travelling animal collections including circuses

- Each circus or travelling animal collection must register with the relevant authority in the State or Territory that it regards as its home base.

- Registration is conditional on the organisation providing an adequate level of security for its animal collection during performance, static displays and while travelling. In general, it is recommended that conditions relating to permits for exotic vertebrates in Threat Categories be in accordance with those conditions required for static animal collections. Such permits would generally be issued by the home base State and receive appropriate endorsement when the circus moves interstate. However, regardless of which categories of exotic vertebrates are being kept by a particular circus, the circus should be required to submit returns on a regular basis to the appropriate jurisdiction detailing exotic vertebrates in the Serious, Moderate and Low Threat Categories that are kept. These returns should detail species (common and scientific name), births (including sex of new animals) or acquisitions (including details of previous owners and sex of new animals) and deaths, sales (including details of new owners) or other changes in numbers of animals.
- Each circus should submit a detailed travel plan to the appropriate State or Territory authority prior to the circus entering and moving through that State or Territory.
- Each State or Territory vertebrate pest control authority has the right to inspect any circus or animal collection, even if registered interstate, to ensure that it meets that State's standard and to compare numbers and types of animals kept with the details contained on regular returns to the relevant authority.
- Some States/Territories may require an amount of money to be paid by a person or organisation keeping certain animals, as security for compliance with permitted conditions of keeping. This requirement should be left for each State or Territory to administer as and when a circus moves in or out of that State or Territory.
- The import of live animals as part of a travelling exhibition is also regulated under the *EPBC Act 1999* and the *Quarantine Act 1908*. In order for an import permit to be granted for this purpose, specimens must appear on the list of specimens suitable for live import. Specimens not appearing on the list must be placed on the list before import approval will be given. Specimens being imported may also be subject to additional conditions on keeping and movement as outlined on the import permit.

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APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE OF THE VERTEBRATE PESTS COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY 2004)

Purpose:

To provide an inter-Governmental mechanism for identification and resolution of vertebrate pest² issues at a National level for Australia.

Terms of Reference and Modus Operandi for the Vertebrate Pests Committee

Ensure an integrated approach to all aspects of vertebrate pest management by:

1. Providing national policy and planning solutions to vertebrate pest issues.
2. Developing a National Vertebrate Pest Strategy and planning, coordinating and monitoring its implementation.
3. Providing policy and planning advice to Natural Resource Management Standing Committee (NRMSC) and Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) on national vertebrate pest issues or as directed by NRMSC. Identify and facilitate implementation of action on significant vertebrate pest issues.
4. Building linkages with NRMSC, PISC, Plant Health Australia, Animal Health Australia, and fisheries and research agencies in Australia and New Zealand on vertebrate pest issues.
5. Identifying potential and emerging vertebrate pest problems and recommend appropriate actions to NRMSC.
6. Identifying and facilitating development, planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of consistent national approaches to vertebrate pest management including:
 - National strategies
 - Codes of Practice
 - Vertebrate Threat Abatement Plans
 - Biological control programs
 - Harmonisation of relevant legislation
 - Vertebrate risk assessment processes
 - Research, education, extension and training
 - Harmonisation of vertebrate pest data collection and management systems
 - Response to emergency vertebrate pest incursions.

² Vertebrate pest in this context is to mean: A vertebrate that has, or has the potential to have, a significant net deleterious impact on a valued resource. The term includes all exotic and native freshwater fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

7. To promote consistent approaches to vertebrate pest issues across all relevant jurisdictions, including:
 - prevention;
 - preparedness for new incursions;
 - reduction of the impact of established populations;
 - consistent, co-ordinated and strategic approaches to management of the economic, environmental and social impacts;
 - eradication of infestations where feasible and appropriate; and
 - standards for management responses.
8. Developing a communications strategy for increasing the profile of vertebrate pests throughout the community, government and key stakeholders.

Modus Operandi

- Develop a three-year strategic plan.
- Report annually to NRMSC, through LWBC with a copy to PISC.
- Liaise with other committees and external stakeholders.
- Set up networks for emergency planning / action.
- Meet at least twice annually and use teleconferences between sessions to progress business.
- To use Technical Working Groups, not necessarily made up of its own members, to provide expert advice on particular pests or issues, and as required to progress business between sessions, on the basis of an operational plan developed in conjunction with the Committee.
- To use appropriate state/territory level processes for developing a whole-of-jurisdiction position on issues before the Committee.

Membership

Policy and Programs Committee representative (as chair); representatives from: the Australian Government (DAFF and DEH), all states and territories, New Zealand.

APPENDIX 2: CONTACT DETAILS FOR RELEVANT STATE AND TERRITORY AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Environment ACT

Tel. 02 6207 9777

Website: www.environment.act.gov.au

Biosecurity Australia, DAFF

Tel. 02 6272 5138

Email. geoff.ryan@DAFF.gov.au

Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries

Natural Resource Management

Tel. 02 6272 5907

Email. nrm.contact@daff.gov.au

Department of Environment and Heritage

Trade Communication and Live Imports

Tel. 02 6274 2388

Email. wildlifetrade@deh.gov.au

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Agriculture

Tel. 026 391 3683

Email. graeme.eggleston@agric.nsw.gov.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Parks & Wildlife Commission

Tel. 08 8951 8250

Email. Glen.Edwards@PLMBAY.PWCNT.NT.GOV.AU

QUEENSLAND

Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy

Tel. 07 3896 3111

www.nrm.qld.gov.au/about/contactus

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Animal & Plant Control Commission

Tel. 08 8303 9530

Email. ramsey.mark@saugov.sa.gov.au

TASMANIA

Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment

Tel. 03 6336 5339

Email. Mick.Statham@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

VICTORIA

Department of Sustainability and Environment

Tel. 03 136 186 (Customer Service Centre)

Email. Brenda.Browne@dse.vic.gov.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of Agriculture

Tel. 08 9366 2300

Email. enquiries@agric.wa.gov.au

APPENDIX 3: PROCEDURES UNDER THE EPBC ACT AND QUARANTINE ACT FOR IMPORTING EXOTIC VERTEBRATES INTO AUSTRALIA

These diagrams illustrates only the procedures for live import as required under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the *Quarantine Act 1908* (Quarantine Act). It is not designed to reflect an integrated process.

Notes:

Part 1:

*Please see flow diagram for Import Assessment of a live animal in all other cases

** AQIS import conditions are provided in the Import Conditions Database (ICON) at www.aqis.gov.au/icon

*** EA Live Import List and guidelines for amending the list are provided at www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/import/index.html

Part 2:

* Please see flow diagram for Import Assessment of a live animal which has NO existing current AFFA import conditions; and is NOT currently included on the EA Live Import List

** AQIS import conditions are provided in the Import Conditions Database (ICON) at www.aqis.gov.au/icon

*** EA Live Import List and guidelines for amending the list are provided at www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/import/index.html

1.1.1.1.1.1 Live Animal



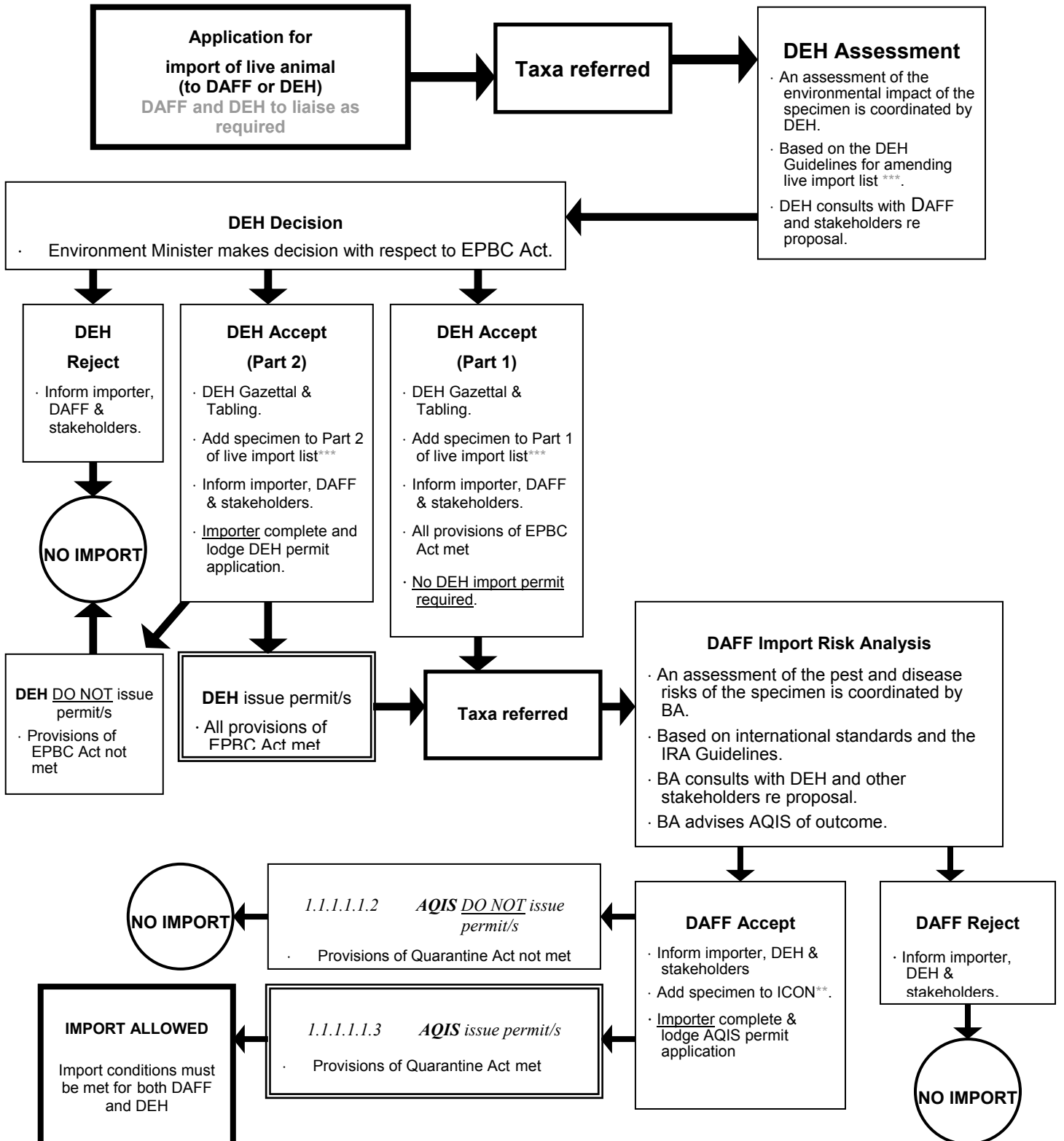
Import Assessment of a live animal which*:

1. has NO existing current **DAFF** import conditions**; **and**
2. is NOT currently included on the **DEH** Live Import List***.

Abbreviations:

- DAFF Dept Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry
- DEH Dept Environment and Heritage
- BA Biosecurity Australia
- AQIS Australian Quarantine Inspection Service

EPBC Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation





1.1.1.1.3.1 Live Animal Import

Import Assessment of a live animal in all other cases*

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